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*You may read about all the award winners by visiting the True Professionals section of the members-only PR and Marketing toolbox on the ISA website ([www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com)).*



## **Mark Hoenigman: A Profile in Professionalism**

**By Janet Huber**

What does it tell you about ISA True Professional Mark Hoenigman when more than 50 research scientists, educators, and commercial, municipal, and utility arborists sign a petition supporting his nomination for an ISA award? During the 2013 Biomechanics Research Week at the Davey Research Farm in Shalersville, Ohio, U.S., this is exactly what happened as a means of honoring Mark for his dedicated efforts in the creation, organization, and implementation of both the 2010 and 2013 Biomechanics Research Weeks.

### **The Origin of Biomechanics Week**

Mark is an ISA Certified Arborist® and Tree Worker Climber Specialist®, and is owner of Busy Bee Services, Ltd., in Novelty, Ohio. He says the concept of Biomechanics Week was born while talking over dinner with colleagues at the 2009 ISA Annual International Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, U.S. The idea of bringing research teams together from around the world to conduct experiments and share ideas, research methods, and results quickly gained momentum as strong interest was generated in the arboricultural research community.

A new project cannot get off the ground without funding, and Biomechanics Week was no exception. When The Davey Tree Expert Company learned about the plans for this event, it pledged full, in-kind support by offering use of the Davey Research Farm and onsite staff assistance. ISA and BioCompliance also stepped up to support the project, followed by generous contributions from a committed group of organizations that included the Arboricultural Research and Education Academy, the Utility Arborist Association, the TREE Fund, the ISA Ohio Chapter, USDA Forest Service, SherrillTree, STIHL, and of course, Busy Bee Services.

### **Ohio's Stone Soup Approach**

In organizing Biomechanics Week, additional concerns surfaced in terms of determining the type of equipment



needed (and providing the necessary quantity of equipment needed) to support research teams using various mechanical methods in their studies. Mark is known for his commitment to education and helping early-career arborists receive training and networking opportunities with more experienced tree care professionals. He is involved with several arborist groups in Ohio that work together to provide free or inexpensive education and training by incorporating what they call the “stone soup approach.” This refers to organizers and participants contributing whatever they can—knowledge, time, equipment, food—and through their combined efforts providing all of the elements needed to support the event (see “Stone Soup at Biomechanics Week” by Alan Siewert; *Arborist News*, December 2010).

The Ohio arborists did not hesitate to do the same for Biomechanics Week, and Mark was instrumental in providing needs as they emerged. While the researchers brought their specialized equipment, Mark donated the use of his air knife, compressor, stump grinder, winch, and a variety of other tools. And this involved many trips to and from Busy Bee Services, a 30-minute drive from the Davey Research Farm, which he did willingly as needs arose. Mark views a problem as a challenge to solve rather than a barrier. He worked tirelessly to help research teams resolve many challenges along the way so that they could accomplish what they had intended for the research week.

The question of how to feed a large group of hungry researchers, students, and climbers was resolved using the same approach. Volunteers brought in various lunch options, and evening cook-outs offered delicious dinner fare. One evening, Mark displayed his culinary skills by overseeing a hog roast, with other delicious contributions from his wife, Janet. They created a dinner so marvelous and memorable that they did it again by popular demand for the 2013 Biomechanics Research Week.

## Biomechanics Week 2013

Mark feels the success of the 2010 Biomechanics Research Week was not only the published research results but also the relationships formed during this intensive week of discovery, which concluded with a symposium that featured project presentations. The 2010 event generated so much enthusiasm that discussions began soon afterwards about planning a second Biomechanics Week in 2013. Mark was an active promoter and spent a good deal of time prior to the 2013 event working with researchers to develop testing equipment.

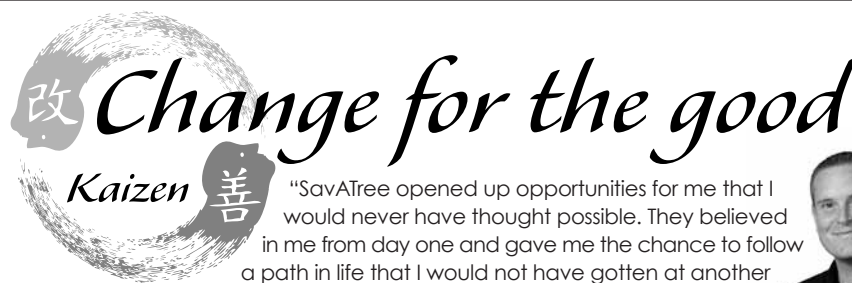
## What Can We Learn From Mark Hoenigman?

- **Don't be afraid to try new ideas.** Get involved and think outside of your particular area of practice. If you have an idea, talk about it with your peers and give it a chance to grow.
- **Give, and it will come back to you in manifold ways.** Be present in all that you do and give whatever you can toward the betterment of the profession and the development of strong relationships with your colleagues. You will ultimately reap the rewards in more ways than you would ever expect.
- **Encourage a sharing of ideas across disciplines.** This can result in the creation of collaborations among researchers, tech companies, equipment developers, and a whole range of potential participants.

According to Siewert (Ohio Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division), “It is a widely held opinion by those who attended both research weeks that if it were not for the skill, dedication, and generosity of Mark, the first week in 2010 would not have been so successful, and the second in 2013 probably would not have happened.”

What does it tell you about ISA True Professional Mark Hoenigman when more than 50 research scientists, educators, and commercial, municipal, and utility arborists sign a petition supporting his nomination for an ISA award? It tells you that he is an exemplary role model for other arborists, one who “walks the talk” and demonstrates the finest qualities of an ISA True Professional of Arboriculture.

*Janet Huber is ISA's corporate communications manager.*



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